DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 446 875 PS 029 033

AUTHOR Saluja, Gitanjali; Scott-Little, Catherine; Clifford, Richard M.

TITLE Readiness for School: A Survey of State Policies and Definitions.

INSTITUTION National Center for Early Development & Learning, Chapel Hill, NC.; SERVE: SouthEastern Regional Vision for Education.

SPONS AGENCY Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.

PUB DATE 2000-00-00

NOTE 55p.; In: Early Childhood Research & Practice: An Internet Journal on the Development, Care and Education of Young Children, Fall 2000; see PS 029 032.

CONTRACT R307A60004; RJ906006701

PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS Age Grade Placement; Definitions; Early Childhood Education; *Educational Policy; Evaluation Criteria; Kindergarten; Kindergarten Children; *Learning Readiness; Policy Analysis; School Entrance Age; *School Readiness; *State Standards; State Surveys; Student Evaluation

ABSTRACT

Understanding the condition of children as they enter school can provide clues to help parents and teachers understand children's performance later in their school career. This information can also provide teachers with essential guidance for individualizing the curriculum to help children learn more effectively. Finally, assessment of the condition of children could be an important part of accountability measurement. This study examined what states are doing with regard to defining and assessing the condition of children as they enter school, often referred to as readiness for school. Early childhood state representatives in each of the 50 states were contacted and interviewed regarding their state's policies on children's readiness for kindergarten. Findings indicated that as of January 2000: (1) age was the criterion most often used to determine eligibility for kindergarten; (2) no state had an official statewide definition of school readiness; (3) several states were studying the issue of school readiness; and (4) local school districts were often making decisions about how children should be assessed and how data on children should be used. (Contains 14 references.) (Author/EV)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 446 875

Early Childhood Research & Practice
Vol. 2 No. 2: Fall 2000

Title Page

Research & Practice

Readiness for School: A Survey of State Policies and Definitions
Gitanjali Saluja, Catherine Scott-Little, & Richard M. Clifford

Conceptualizing the Professional Role in Early Childhood Centers: Emerging Profiles in Four European Countries
Pamela Oberhuemer

Language Development and Science Inquiry: The Head Start on Science and Communication Program
Evelyn R. Klein, Penny L. Hammrich, Stefanie Bloom, & Anika Ragins

Starting Child Care: What Young Children Learn about Relating to Adults in the First Weeks of Starting Child Care
Carmen Dalli

Observations & Reflections

Early Childhood Educators and the FIS Grant Program: An Interview with Naomi Karp

Features

The Hairy Head Project
Barbara Gallick

Science Education and Young Children: Recent Citations from the ERIC Database

New at ERIC EECE

PS 029033

ECRP
EARLY CHILDHOOD RESEARCH & PRACTICE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Volume 2, Number 2

Readiness for School: A Survey of State Policies and Definitions

Gitanjali Saluja, National Center for Early Development and Learning;
Catherine Scott-Little, SERVE; & **Richard M. Clifford**, National Center for Early Development and Learning

Editors' Note:

Join us in an electronic discussion of this paper. The dialog box makes it easy to comment on the article, ask questions, or suggest additional considerations or implications. Selected substantive contributions will be listed by topic on this Web site.

Lilian G. Katz & Dianne Rothenberg

Abstract

Understanding the condition of children as they enter school can provide clues to help parents and teachers understand children's performance later in their school career. This information can also provide teachers with essential information for individualizing the curriculum to help children learn more effectively. Finally, assessment of the condition of children could be an important part of accountability measurement. This paper provides data on what states are doing with regard to defining and assessing the condition of children as they enter school, often referred to as readiness for school. Early childhood state representatives in each of the 50 states were contacted and interviewed regarding their state's policies on children's

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

readiness for kindergarten. Results indicate that as of January 2000: (1) age was the criterion most often used to determine eligibility for kindergarten, (2) no state had an official statewide definition of school readiness, (3) several states were studying the issue of school readiness, and (4) local school districts were often making decisions about how children should be assessed and how data on children should be used. Further research is needed to track changes in state policies over time.

Introduction

With the increasing demand for accountability and improved student performance that has swept the nation, policy makers and educators have struggled to find ways to assess children when they enter school. Understanding the condition of children as they enter school can provide clues to help parents and teachers understand children's performance later in their school career. Further, this knowledge can provide teachers with essential information for individualizing the curriculum to help children learn more effectively. Finally, assessment of children's condition at school entrance may play an important role in accountability measurement, because this information can provide baseline data against which future data on children can be compared. It should be noted that different assessment methods and instruments may be needed to accomplish these separate and distinct functions. The importance of positive early life experiences is widely recognized; however, questions about how to describe children at the time of school entrance through both formal and informal assessments have been the subject of considerable debate over the past decade.

In an effort to document the most current efforts to define and measure children's condition as they enter school, the National Center for Early Development and Learning (NCEDL) and SERVE (Note 1) partnered to complete a survey of readiness initiatives in all 50 states. This paper provides data on what states are doing with regard to defining and assessing children at school entrance.

Defining and Assessing Children's Status at School Entrance

Despite the recent attention that the topic of school readiness has received, there is still much debate on what it means to be "ready" for school. Parents, teachers, school administrators, policy makers, and politicians are all concerned about young children and whether or not they enter school "ready to learn." This concern has been especially true since the National Education Goals Panel adopted the first goal that "by the year 2000, all children in America will start school ready to learn" (National Education Goals Panel, 1991). Most people (Kagan, 1999; National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1988) argue that all children are ready to learn and prefer to use the phrase "ready for school." So what does it mean to be "ready for school?" Both terms appear to be problematic because of unintended consequences of presuming that children need to know certain things before they can enter school.

The majority of states determine a child's eligibility for kindergarten by his or her age. Although the date varies by state, most states allow children to enter kindergarten in the fall if they have turned or will turn 5 years old by a certain date. Table 1 displays the cutoff dates used by states to determine entry to kindergarten (Education Commission of the States, 2000).

Table 1
Cutoff Dates for Eligibility for Kindergarten

Date	States Using Cutoff Date
June 1	Indiana
July 1	Missouri
August 15	Alaska
August 31	Delaware Kansas North Dakota Washington
September 1	Alabama Arizona Florida Georgia Idaho Illinois Minnesota Mississippi New Mexico Oklahoma Oregon South Carolina South Dakota Texas West Virginia Wisconsin
September 2	Utah
September 10	Montana
September 15	Arkansas Iowa Wyoming
September 30	Nevada Ohio Tennessee Virginia Louisiana
October 1	Kentucky

October 15	Nebraska Maine
October 16	North Carolina
December 1	Michigan New York
December 2	California
December 31	Rhode Island Hawaii Maryland
January 1	Connecticut Vermont
Dates are determined at the local or district level	Colorado Massachusetts New Hampshire New Jersey Pennsylvania

Age is one characteristic that children generally have in common when they start kindergarten. However, when children are 5 years old, they vary greatly with regard to their physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development. The National Education Goals Panel (Kagan, Moore, & Bredekamp, 1995) has established five dimensions in which children vary and that contribute significantly to children's success in school. According to the Goals Panel, school readiness should be thought of as having at least the following dimensions:

- Health and physical development
- Emotional well-being and social competence
- Approaches to learning
- Communicative skills
- Cognition and general knowledge

Although most researchers, educators, and policy makers agree that these dimensions are essential elements of readiness, there is some debate as to whether these dimensions are exhaustive (Meisels, 1999). Further, individuals vary with regard to what they believe should be included as indicators of the standard to be met on each of these dimensions.

Although the five dimensions guide us with regard to what we should measure, the question of how to measure these domains remains unanswered. Assessing preschool-age children is challenging. At this age, children's development is rapid and uneven, and their development is greatly impacted by environmental factors such as the care they have received and the learning environments they have experienced. Furthermore, typical standardized paper-and-pencil tests given in later grades are not appropriate for children entering school (Shepard, Kagan, & Wurtz, 1998).

The demand for standard methods to document children's readiness has become increasingly strong despite the difficulties in assessing young children. A number of organizations have developed policy statements to outline how children should be assessed. Six professional organizations (Association for Childhood Education International, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, International Reading Association, National Association of Elementary School Principals, National Council of Teachers of English, and the National Association for the Education of Young Children) issued a joint statement in 1986 discouraging the use of "rigid, formal pre-reading programs" and standardized testing for preschool-age children (International Reading Association, 1986). In 1987, the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education (NAECS/SDE) issued a position statement titled "Unacceptable Trends in Kindergarten Entry and Placement." NAEYC and NAECS/SDE joined together to issue a position statement on appropriate curriculum and assessment for children ages 3 through 8 in 1990, and the National Education Goals Panel published "Principles and Recommendations for Early Childhood Assessments" in 1998 (Shepard, Kagan, & Wurtz, 1998). NAECS/SDE updated and reissued the position statement in *Still! Unacceptable Trends in Kindergarten Entry and Placement* in 2000.

Taken together, these position statements indicate that readiness assessment should

- Benefit children and the adults who work with children
- Be used for the purposes for which it is designed
- Be valid and reliable
- Be age appropriate, using naturalistic observations to collect information as children interact in "real-life" situations
- Be holistic, collecting information on all developmental domains (physical, social, emotional, and cognitive)
- Be linguistically and culturally appropriate
- Collect information through a variety of processes and multiple sources (collection of children's work, observations of children, interviews with children, parent reports, etc.)
- Be used to guide instruction and not to determine children's placement in school

There is agreement that school readiness is a two-dimensional concept and that both elements of readiness are equally important: in addition to children being ready for school, schools need to be ready to receive all children. The National Education Goals Panel has identified *ready schools* as a critical element of Goal 1. Further, the Ready Schools Resource Group of the Goals Panel (Shore, 1998) has outlined "Ten Keys to Ready Schools." Included in these "Ten Keys" are the following: "Ready schools should have strong leadership, strive for continuity between early care and education programs, promote smooth transitions between home and school, be committed to the success of *every* child as well as every teacher and adult who interacts with children at school, use approaches that have been shown to raise children's achievement and then alter practices and programs if they do not benefit

children."

Trends in Readiness Assessment

With increasing demand for accountability in the preschool and early school years, defining and measuring readiness have become even more important in the past decade. States have been left to develop their own frameworks, with guidance provided by the National Education Goals Panel, NAEYC, and other national efforts.

State-level efforts to assess children's readiness can best be described as a pendulum swinging from standardized measures that did not meet the above principles in the mid-1980s (Gnezda & Bolig, 1988) to limited readiness testing in the mid-1990s (Shepard, Taylor, & Kagan, 1996). In the mid-1980s, many states had requirements for standardized testing for children prior to kindergarten or first grade. Gnezda and Bolig (1988) conducted a national survey of early childhood specialists and testing and evaluation specialists in state departments of education to gather information on pre-kindergarten and kindergarten testing. Nineteen states mandated that children be screened, and 7 states mandated "readiness" testing upon entry to kindergarten. Confusion between screening and readiness testing was reported by a number of respondents. Results from both screening and readiness tests were, in several instances, being used to delay school entry or place children in special programs. Six states mandated and 37 states reported local districts using first-grade readiness testing. In 35 of these states, assessment results were used to determine children's placement at the end of kindergarten.

In the early 1990s, states began to move away from readiness testing, perhaps as a result of the concerted efforts to outline the principles for appropriate early childhood assessment described above. Shepard, Taylor, and Kagan (1996) conducted extensive surveys between May 1995 and August 1996 to determine states' early childhood assessment policies and practices. Telephone interviews were conducted with early childhood coordinators and state testing directors, Part H and IDEA coordinators, Title I coordinators, Head Start directors, and Goals 2000 contact persons. Their sample included in-depth interviews with at least one person from each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

This study found that most states had made efforts to move away from readiness testing by developing policies against the use of readiness testing, issuing publications on appropriate assessment in early childhood, or providing professional development opportunities on early childhood assessment. However, a number of states reported that local districts continued to use standardized testing with young children. A number of states mandated formal screenings for every child to meet the federal IDEA requirements for a plan whereby children with disabilities can be identified. Many states reported efforts to clarify the difference between readiness testing and screening, and how screening results should be used. While Gnezda and Bolig (1988) found frequent examples of special education screening

measures being misused to make decisions to delay school entry or plan instruction, respondents to Shepard, Taylor, and Kagan's survey indicated that this type of misuse was less frequent but still common.

Shepard, Taylor, and Kagan (1996) also found that some states and local districts were moving to new forms of assessment in the early grades. Respondents indicated that there was less readiness testing and increased use of teacher observation assessments such as the High/Scope (1992) Child Observation Record (COR) or the Work Sampling System by Meisels (Meisels, Jablon, Marsden, Dichtelmiller, & Dorfman, 1994). These efforts to support individualized instruction were, however, mostly concentrated at the local district level. Few state-level assessment programs had been developed to support instruction.

It seems as though the pendulum of assessment policies had swung from widespread use of readiness assessments and other instruments in the 1980s to fairly limited use of readiness assessments in a few states in the 1990s. To determine where the assessment pendulum had moved toward the end of the 1990s, NCEDL and SERVE conducted a follow-up study to collect information on how states are defining and measuring readiness.

Method

Study Purpose

The purpose of the study was to report on current readiness assessment efforts in all 50 states. We were interested in learning how states have defined readiness and what approaches they were using to measure readiness. We were fully aware that readiness activities were a "moving target," with policies in some states changing within a few months' time. Description of policies at the time of the interview may not reflect the most current information on policies and practices in each state.

Sample

Data were collected from a total of 71 respondents from October 1999 through January 2000. We interviewed at least one individual in each state. We began by contacting the early childhood state specialist in each state Department of Education. We obtained these names from the directory of the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education (NAECS/SDE). For those states not represented in the NAECS/SDE directory, we called the state Department of Education and asked to talk to the individual most familiar with the policies regarding the education of young children.

Procedure

Data were collected through phone interviews. SERVE enlisted the assistance of four other Regional Educational Laboratories (AEL, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, and Laboratory for Student Success) to collect data. The regions of the country were divided so that each lab collected information in their own regional area, and SERVE and NCEDL collected data from the remaining regions of the country.

To make initial contact in each state, we sent each state representative a letter explaining the purpose of the study and a copy of the interview questions. In the letter, we explained that we would be calling them to conduct a phone interview using the enclosed questions. In some cases, the initial contact person in a state suggested that another individual be interviewed instead. In states where there was more than one individual with knowledge of state policies, we conducted multiple interviews. To ensure content validity, interviewers provided each respondent with a summary of his or her interview. At this point, respondents were able to make changes or corrections to their interview data. Once these alterations were made, the responses were emailed to a project coordinator and organized into a large matrix.

The matrix was placed on a private Web site that only the respondents and project staff could access. After viewing their responses and the responses of those from other states, respondents had another opportunity to make changes to the data from their state. This step spurred some to make additions based on what others had included. After the verification process was complete, we examined the data by question, searching for common themes.

Instrument

The following questions were asked:

- How does your state define school readiness (readiness for kindergarten)?
- How does your state measure school readiness?
- How do you use the data that you obtain on school readiness?
- How do you deal with assessing children with special needs (children with disabilities, limited English proficiency, behavioral and emotional problems, parents with limited education and/or economic resources)?

Is there a systematic way of pulling these data together at the state level? If so, please describe this process.

Results

This section reviews the results of the survey related to each of the five questions.

How Do States Define School Readiness?

No state has a formal, statewide definition other than an age of eligibility requirement. Five states (Illinois, Colorado, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, and South Dakota) stated that local districts may have formal definitions of school readiness. Five states (Alabama, Arkansas, California, Connecticut, and Mississippi) reported that they have developed frameworks or benchmarks to describe school readiness. Three of these states have created frameworks that align with broader state frameworks. Further, 6 states (California, Indiana, Kansas, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin) stated that they believe that states should place emphasis *on schools being ready for all children*.

How Do States Measure School Readiness?

States vary with regard to measurement of school readiness. Thirteen states responded that they conduct statewide screening or assessment when children enter kindergarten (see Table 2). In addition to these 13 states, 5 states require statewide screenings or assessments, but local school districts decide how to conduct them. Some of these states provide guidelines that districts must follow, while other states allow districts to follow their own guidelines. Twenty-six states responded that they do not mandate any readiness assessments, but local districts may choose to assess children prior to, or as they enter, kindergarten. Sixteen states currently have readiness assessment initiatives in place, with task forces, committees, or state agencies mandated to develop a plan for readiness assessment or assessment systems under development or being piloted. Finally, 6 states indicated that they do not assess school readiness. Some states, such as Nebraska, have made this decision for fear that the process of assessing readiness may be harmful to children (see Table 3).

Table 2
State Efforts to Assess Pre-kindergarten and Kindergarten Children

State	Type of Assessment/Screening
Alabama	Alabama Learning Inventory • Administered by teachers to every public school kindergarten student within the first 4 weeks of school • Measures pre-reading and quantitative concepts • Information used for instructional purposes • Data compiled at the local and state level
Alaska	Alaska Developmental Profile • Global measure used to provide summary information on each school to the state Department

	of Education • Districts decide how to gather the information • Information will be used to determine patterns and identify areas with high need
Arkansas	• Health and developmental screening is conducted on all children entering kindergarten
Florida	• All children entering kindergarten are assessed by their teachers within the first 3 weeks of school • Local districts can decide upon instruments, as long as they measure the 16 indicators outlined by the state Department of Education • Information is used to guide instruction
Louisiana	Kindergarten Developmental Readiness Screening Program • Every kindergarten child is screened within 30 days of the first day of school (before or after) • One of four state-identified instruments may be used • Information is used to guide instruction but is also collected at the state level
Maryland	Work Sampling System • Data used as a school improvement device and for instructional purposes
Minnesota	• Early childhood health and developmental screening
New Mexico	• All children undergo an initial screening upon entry to school
New York	• All children are screened for health; English proficiency; and motor, cognitive, and language development
North Carolina	• Early childhood health and developmental screening
Ohio	• Teachers collect data on children in preschool programs through naturalistic observations • The Galileo computer system is used to aggregate data • Information is used for program accountability
Tennessee	• General screening is done (usually the Brigance is used) of all students entering kindergarten • Information is used to guide instruction

Utah	• All kindergarten children are assessed during the first 2 weeks of school • Information is used to guide instruction

Table 3
State Policies Regarding School Readiness Assessment

Readiness Assessment Policies	Number of States	Names of States
State conducts screening or assessment	13	Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana, Maryland, Minnesota, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Tennessee, Utah
Local schools conduct screening or assessment	5	Florida, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, Texas
Some local school districts conduct assessments	26	Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Kentucky, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, Mississippi, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming
State is developing plans to implement statewide readiness assessment	16	Delaware, Florida, Hawaii, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, South Carolina, Texas, Vermont, Washington, Wyoming
State does not assess school readiness	6	Delaware, Hawaii, Kansas, Oklahoma, Nebraska, Virginia

Vermont has included an assessment of schools' readiness to receive children as part of its school readiness assessment system.

How Do States Use the Data Obtained on School Readiness?

Twelve states reported that they use data collected on children prior to kindergarten for instructional purposes. These data are given to kindergarten teachers to inform them about their incoming class and help them develop individual education plans for children needing them. Seven states use data for school improvement purposes. The data help them to identify high-need schools and improve outcome and services for children in families in need. Six states reported that the data they collect are used for screening purposes, to identify children with special needs, developmental delays, and health

problems (vision and hearing). Finally, four states reported that districts decide how data should be used (see Table 4).

Table 4
How States Use Data Obtained on School Readiness

Purpose of Data (How Are Data Used?)	States
Instructional purposes	Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Florida, Indiana, Louisiana, Mississippi, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Utah
School improvement and accountability	Alaska, Connecticut, Maryland, Missouri, Ohio, Oregon, Vermont
Screening and/or placement	Louisiana, Minnesota, New Mexico, Oklahoma, West Virginia, Wisconsin
Districts use information differently	Idaho, Kentucky, New Jersey, Pennsylvania

How Do States Deal with Assessing Children with Special Needs?

Since most states do not have statewide readiness assessments in place, the methods for addressing children with special needs also tend to be locally dominated. Those states that commented on this issue indicated a recognition of federal regulations relating to the identification and placement of children with special needs but provided only very general indications of how this requirement was carried out at the local level. Of the 13 states with some state-level effort to conduct a screening or assessment when children enter kindergarten, 7 indicated that specific adaptations in the procedures or instruments were provided, 3 indicated that some or all children with identified special needs were exempted from the assessments, and 6 indicated that a separate system for assessing these children was provided. A number of state representatives pointed out that readiness assessments were, in general, not suitable for making placement decisions and were not used.

Is There a Systematic Method in Place to Pull These Data Together at the State Level?

At least 8 states collect data on children's readiness at the state level (see Table 5). The remaining states either do not have a system in place to collect any data or have a system in place to collect data but do not collect data on readiness. Four states did not indicate whether they had a statewide system for collecting readiness data (see Table 5).

Table 5

States' Data Collection Procedures

Are Data Collected at the State Level?	States
Yes	Alabama, Alaska, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Minnesota, Ohio, Vermont
No or Not Applicable	Arizona, Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New Jersey, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming
Not Determined	Colorado, Idaho, New York, North Carolina

A complete summary of readiness policies in each state related to the five survey questions is given in Table 6. This table can be downloaded as a Word 97 file or viewed in its searchable database format. The database can be searched by state and by any of the five survey questions.

Conclusions and Implications

School readiness continues to be a "hot topic" among early educators and policy makers across the country. Historically, the early childhood community has been reluctant to define school readiness and pursue assessment of young children on a wide-scale basis. There are good reasons for this position. Assessing young children is theoretically, psychometrically, and logistically difficult. The potential for long-lasting impacts of misuse of the data is high. From another perspective, however, it seems hard to believe that we cannot indicate in some way how well prepared children are as they come to school. Data on the condition of children as they arrive at school are important in interpreting later accountability measures. Such data are also helpful in understanding how well early childhood services perform in raising the developmental level of young children prior to entry into school. Finally, it seems logical that schools should be able to use data on the condition of children entering school to help design and implement educational programs for these children.

With the ever-increasing emphasis on improved school performance and program accountability, it is doubtful that the early childhood community can sidestep the issue of readiness assessment. The sheer number of states working on policy initiatives in this area is an indication that readiness assessments are going to be a common experience for children in many states. The question is not *if* but *how* children will be assessed and how these data will be used (Kagan, 1999).

Results from this survey indicate some changes in assessment policies and practices over time. In the 1980s, Gnezda and Bolig (1988) found evidence of fairly widespread use of standardized assessments with kindergarten children, and many states reported that these assessments were used to make placement decisions for individual children. In the mid-1990s, Shepard, Taylor, and Kagan (1996) reported that most states had made efforts to inform policy makers and educators of appropriate uses of assessment in kindergarten. Fewer states reported using standardized assessments of children and assessment data to make placement decisions for children. Data from this current survey indicate that perhaps the pendulum of readiness assessment is swinging back toward states implementing readiness assessment systems, but in a new way. Rather than using readiness assessment for placement decisions, many states are developing readiness assessment systems to profile the condition of children as they enter school and to develop classroom curriculum activities to better meet the needs of children.

Data from this survey also indicate that efforts to minimize the misuse of readiness assessment tools may have had some impact at the state level. Respondents seemed to indicate an increased awareness of recommended early childhood assessment practices. For instance, many respondents articulated the difference between "screening" and "readiness assessment." Many indicated that statewide assessments are used not to make decisions about individual children's placement but to guide instruction in the classroom or for accountability purposes.

Although the work that many states have done in the area of school readiness is significant, two fundamental issues have been largely unaddressed: the importance of schools being ready for all children and the role of local districts in readiness assessment. School readiness is a two-sided equation: the child's readiness for school and the school's readiness to receive the child. Although several survey respondents indicated that their state emphasizes the importance of schools being ready for all children, only one state reported efforts to incorporate assessment of schools into its school readiness assessment system. It is clear that the second side of the equation—the readiness of schools—is not being widely assessed. Yet, the readiness of schools can play a critical role in explaining children's performance in later grades. To gain a true assessment of school readiness, data must be collected on both children and schools.

The role of the local district is the second issue that warrants consideration. Many respondents indicated that local districts have a great deal of latitude in how children are assessed when they enter school and how data from these assessments are used. Data on how local districts are assessing children are scarce. These assessment strategies are likely to vary in quality. Some may use standardized assessment strategies, while others may use instruments that are locally developed and have not been tested for validity and reliability. It is impossible to determine local school districts' assessment strategies without further research. The National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education (NAECS/SDE, 2000) recently revised its

position statement on assessment of kindergarten children. The document, titled *Still! Unacceptable Trends in Kindergarten Entry and Placement,* indicates continuing concern over the misuse of assessments in kindergarten settings. Respondents to this survey of state-level assessment practices indicated that their states do not use assessment data to determine children's placement in school; however, the policies and practices of local districts need to be examined to ensure that they are doing no harm to children.

Relatively little attention has been given to issues related to children with special needs and readiness assessment. Responsibility for dealing with these issues is almost uniformly left up to the local district or school with little guidance from state agencies. Although a few states address these issues directly, for the most part there seems to be a disconnect between the early childhood and special education communities when it comes to readiness assessment. It is clear that special educators and parents of children with special needs should be partners as states work to develop readiness assessment systems.

Results from this survey indicate a need for education on principles of early childhood assessment and for additional research. Efforts need to be made to inform policy makers and educators of recommended assessment strategies and how the data from the assessments should be used. Research on early childhood assessment must be translated into a format that can be used by policy makers as they design readiness assessment systems. Finally, safeguards such as random sampling must be built into assessment systems to ensure that assessments provide valid information and the information is used in a manner consistent with good early childhood practice.

Additional research is needed to monitor state policies and practices over time. Many states are on the brink of implementing new statewide assessment systems. Future research will be needed to document the implementation of these systems, the effectiveness of these systems, and how data from these assessments are used. Further study is also needed to determine how local districts approach readiness assessment and how they are using the data.

This survey indicates that the vast majority of work in school readiness assessment is taking place at the local district and individual school levels, but that many states are now moving toward more direction at the state level. This situation provides both opportunities and concerns. If such systems are developed with the best knowledge of young children, of appropriate assessment practices for children at this point in their lives, and with the understanding that there are risks of substantial harm if systems are not designed to safeguard individual children and teachers, then the move to increase readiness assessment can have substantial benefits for both children and for schools. To make this vision a reality will require involvement of a broad array of professionals and families in a concerted effort to make schools a better place for young children.

Acknowledgments

This research was supported by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), U.S. Department of Education, through the National Center for Early Development and Learning (under contract no. R307A60004) and SERVE (under contract no. RJ96006701). The findings and opinions expressed do not reflect the position or policies of OERI or the U.S. Department of Education. The authors gratefully acknowledge assistance from the following persons and Regional Educational Laboratories in collecting the data for the study: Glyn Brown, Kathleen Dufford-Melindez, Pamela Kahlich, Carol Perroncel, Sandra Ritter, Jenna Clayton, AEL, Laboratory for Student Success, North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, and Southwest Educational Development Laboratory. We would also like to thank the Early Childhood State Specialists and other respondents who participated in the phone interview process and the anonymous reviewers who offered helpful suggestions for the manuscript.

Notes

1. The National Center for Early Development and Learning (NCEDL) is a national early childhood research center. SERVE is one of 10 Regional Education Laboratories across the United States and the lead laboratory in early childhood research. Both NCEDL and SERVE are funded by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement in the U.S. Department of Education.

References

Education Commission of the States. (2000). *ECS Online.* Available: http://www.ecs.org/ [2000, May 15].

Gnezda, M. Therese, & Bolig, Rosemary. (1988). *A national survey of public school testing of prekindergarten and kindergarten children.* Paper prepared for the National Forum on the Future of Children and Families and the National Association of State Boards of Education.

High/Scope. (1992). *Child observation record.* Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Press.

International Reading Association. (1986). Literacy development and pre-first grade: A joint statement of concerns about present practices in pre-first grade reading instruction and recommendations for improvement. *Childhood Education, 62*(2), 110-111. EJ 345 999.

Kagan, Sharon L. (1999). Cracking the readiness mystique. *Young Children, 54*(5), 2-3.

Kagan, Sharon L.; Moore, Evelyn; & Bredekamp, Sue (Eds.). (1995). *Reconsidering children's early development and learning: Toward common views and vocabulary.* Report of the National Education Goals Panel, Goal 1 Technical Planning Group. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office. ED 391 576.

Meisels, Samuel J. (1999). Assessing readiness. In Robert C. Pianta & Martha J. Cox (Eds.), *The transition to kindergarten.* Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes. ED 438 026.

Meisels, Samuel J.; Jablon, Judy R.; Marsden, Dorothea B.; Dichtelmiller, Margo L.; & Dorfman, Aviva. (1994). *The work sampling system.* Ann Arbor, MI: Rebus Planning Associates.

National Association for the Education of Young Children. (1988). NAEYC position statement on standardized testing of young children 3 through 8 years of age. *Young Children, 43*(3), 42-47. EJ 367 920.

National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education. (2000). *Still! Unacceptable trends in kindergarten entry and placement* [Online]. Available: http://ericps.crc.uiuc.edu/naecs/position/trends2000.html [2000, May 15].

National Education Goals Panel. (1991). *The Goal 1 Technical Planning Subgroup report on school readiness.* Washington, DC: Author.

Shepard, Lorrie; Kagan, Sharon L.; & Wurtz, Emily (Eds.). (1998). *Principles and recommendations for early childhood assessments.* Washington, DC: National Education Goals Panel. ED 416 033.

Shepard, Lorrie; Taylor, Grace A.; & Kagan, Sharon L. (1996). *Trends in early childhood assessment policies and practices.* Report prepared for the National Education Goals Panel. Washington, DC: National Education Goals Panel.

Shore, Rima. (1998). *Ready schools.* A report of the Goal 1 Ready Schools Resource Group. Washington, DC: National Education Goals Panel. (Also available: http://www.negp.gov/Reports/readysch.pdf). ED 416 582.

Author Information

Gitanjali Saluja, Ph.D., is a post-doctoral research associate at the National Center for Early Development and Learning at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She is involved in several studies of public school involvement in pre-kindergarten education.

Gitanjali Saluja, Ph.D.
National Center for Early Development and Learning
Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
CB #8040, Bank of America Plaza
137 E. Franklin St.
Chapel Hill, NC 27514-8040
Telephone: 919-962-7370
Fax: 919-962-7328
Email: saluja@mail.fpg.unc.edu

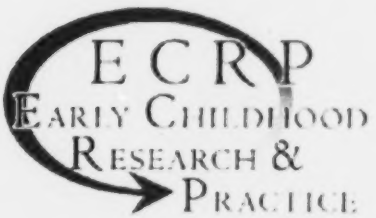
Catherine Scott-Little, Ph.D., is the Early Childhood Project Director for SERVE, one of the Department of Education's 10 Regional Educational Laboratories. She has extensive experience managing early childhood programs. Her interests include readiness assessment systems and the development of practitioner-oriented publications to assist parents, caregivers, teachers, administrators, and policy makers apply research-based child development information.

Catherine Scott-Little
SERVE
UNC-Greensboro
P.O. Box 5367
Greensboro, NC 27435
Telephone: 800-755-3277
Email: cscottli@serve.org

Richard M. Clifford, Ph.D., is a senior investigator and fellow at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center and co-director of the National Center for Early Development and Learning, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He is past president of NAEYC and conducts research on quality assessment and policy in early childhood education.

Richard M. Clifford, Ph.D.

Senior Scientist and Co-Director
National Center for Early Development and Learning
Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
CB #8040, 300 Bank of America Center
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-8040
Telephone: 919-962-4737
Fax: 919-962-7328
Email: dickclifford@unc.edu



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Table 6: Summary of State Definitions and Policies Regarding Children's' Readiness for Kindergarten

State	How does your state define readiness?	How does your state assess readiness for school?	How are the data used?	How do you assess children with special needs?	Are data integrated into a management information system?
Alabama	There is no official definition, though they have developed a publication titled "Alabama's Kindergarten" that outlines the state's philosophy and goals for kindergarten. Attendance in kindergarten is not required but is open to all children who turn 5 by September 1. The state has developed courses of study that describe kindergarten curriculum. In addition, the state has developed the Alabama Early Learning Inventory (pre-reading and numerical concepts). It was piloted last year, and this year is the first year for use in all public schools.	The Alabama Early Learning Inventory, which measures pre-reading and quantitative concepts, is administered to every public school kindergarten student within the first 4 weeks of school. All schools are required to utilize this measure. Districts may supplement with additional measures. Teachers administer this measure. Teachers attend a 3-hour training provided by the local education agency (LEA).	Information is used for instructional purposes to inform teachers and guide instruction. It is also used to inform pre-kindergarten programs.	The Alabama Early Learning Inventory is used for all students. An adaptations manual has been developed to provide instructions to adapt the measure for special needs children.	Data are compiled at the school district level and then at the state level.
Alaska	There is no definition. Children are eligible for kindergarten if they turn 5 by August 15.	The state has developed and mandates the use the Alaska Developmental Profile. The Developmental Profile is designed as a global measure to provide summary information from each school site to the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development. The Profile is not an assessment tool itself, but it provides the framework for the categories of developmental information that are to be assessed at the school level. The Department believes that districts are in the best position to decide how to gather the detailed developmental information about individual children and are expected to choose which methods they wish to use to gather the information. Teachers then summarize the information on the Developmental Profile form and submit it to the Department. Teachers gather information on all entering kindergarten or first-graders who are entering school for the first time. This must be completed by November 1.	This is the first year Alaska is using this Profile. They intend to look at patterns and identify areas with high need. In addition, they hope to create an awareness of the need for holistic assessment of young children.	If a child has an Individual Education Plan (IEP), specified adaptations may be made.	A composite Profile form for each classroom is submitted to the state. Each elementary principal receives the results for his/her site from the state. Additionally, district assessment directors receive the results for their district and for each site. The Profile is not tied to a student-based database.
Arizona	Arizona does not define school readiness	The focus of academic standards is	Arizona has 20 million dollars	LEAs utilize information to	There is no state

State	How does your state define readiness?	How does your state assess readiness for school?	How are the data used?	How do you assess children with special needs?	Are data integrated into a management information system?
	or assess children for school readiness. Children are eligible for kindergarten if they turn 5 by September 1. Arizona allows LEAs to extend this date to December 31, if they deem it appropriate. Individual LEAs may have a definition for school readiness used within the district.	kindergarten and above. Kindergarten readiness is measured by some LEAs. This is a local decision and varies by district. Sometimes kindergarten teachers administer the chosen instrument. Arizona has developed academic standards for children entering first grade. Assessment is made at the end of the kindergarten year.	designated for at-risk programs. Some of this money is used to assess the readiness of a small group of low socioeconomic status children. However, LEAs may then utilize this information to plan an individual child's education program.	plan an individual child's education program.	tracking of results.
Arkansas	Currently there is not a definition of readiness. A child must be 5 on or before September 15 to be eligible for kindergarten. Preschool Curriculum Frameworks and benchmarks have been developed for children 3-5 years of age. The Early Childhood Curriculum Frameworks align with the Curriculum Frameworks for students in grades k-4. Literacy and math checklist/guides have been developed to assist schools.	Each school is required to conduct a well child check as children make the transition into public school kindergarten that is equivalent EPSDT inclusive of health and developmental screening. Most schools conduct kindergarten entry assessments. The selection of the assessments is school choice, and there are a variety of assessments utilized. Many schools have participated in professional development regarding literacy development in young children and utilize the same literacy assessments as students enter kindergarten.	Assessments administered should assist the teacher in curriculum planning and instruction.	There are specific state criteria and guidelines for the identification, services, and transition of children with special needs, birth through 5 years, that adhere to the IDEA regulations. Assessments for children with disabilities are conducted by a multidisciplinary team.	Schools do not currently report information related to school readiness to the state level.
California	A child is ready for school when he or she turns 5 on or before December 2 of the current school year. If the child misses the deadline, the LEA could choose to admit the child after the child turns 5. This is rarely done. California has studied the issue of school readiness for the past 10 years and has published a number of documents about it. The state in the past decade has expressed the policy that schools must be ready for all children.	The state department has no record of who is and who is not assessing readiness. LEAs use whatever instrument they choose. The state has developed standards for k-12 in four subject areas (language arts, mathematics, science, and history/social sciences). Many schools use these standards to guide their assessments. The state is developing standards for preschool and child development programs. While they will be used in state-subsidized programs to assist with quality improvement, other programs may be using them as well.	Results of individual students' readiness assessments could legitimately be used for curriculum planning or for determining that additional assessment is needed for special education purposes. Schools use the data to plan intensive interventions for those children who are not ready or who do not display knowledge or skills required by the standards.	Schools are required to identify special needs children from birth to age 5 and work with them before they start school. Parents can go to their local school and ask for testing. Local Even Start Family Literacy Programs, Head Start agencies, and state-subsidized child development programs identify children with special needs.	No.
Colorado	There is no state definition. Some individual districts measure readiness, using a variety of screening procedures, such as Child Find.			Districts are required to serve 3- and 4-year-olds with special needs. There is also the Colorado Preschool Program, which is state funded with a capped enrollment.	

State	How does your state define readiness?	How does your state assess readiness for school?	How are the data used?	How do you assess children with special needs?	Are data integrated into a management information system?
Connecticut	All children who turn 5 by January 1 are considered eligible for kindergarten. Connecticut has a school readiness grant program for children, ages 3 and 4, who reside in identified priority and severe need school communities and who meet certain eligibility requirements. This program is defined as a "nonsectarian program that: (1) meets the standards set by the department, and (2) provides a developmentally appropriate learning experience of not less than 450 hours and 180 days for eligible children." Programs are encouraged to combine with child care to provide full-day/full-year programs that meet child and family needs. Currently, 16 Priority School Districts and 25 Severe Need Schools are receiving these funds.	A guide "Preschool Curriculum Frameworks and Benchmarks for Children in Preschool Programs" was developed and is aligned with the state framework for curriculum for k-12. An accompanying child profile is in the process of being pilot tested and will be used by preschool and kindergarten teachers to measure the skill levels of children in relationship to the curriculum goals. The document was developed for use in the school readiness programs but is also available for use by all preschool programs. Some districts choose to test or assess children using locally selected instruments. Tests are not to be used to exclude children from kindergarten or other pre-kindergarten services.	Data are collected regarding the utilization, demographics, funding sources, family income levels, health insurance, and types of slots utilized (full-day/full-year, part-day/part-year, extended day). A longitudinal study with Families and Work Institute of New York will look at child outcomes and program impact in five selected communities. An annual program evaluation system has been developed that will be used by all participating programs starting July 1, 2000.	Children who have been referred are identified through the multidisciplinary assessment process of the PPT. Identified children then receive an IEP. Children with serious emotional problems as defined in IDEA are eligible for special education. Children are eligible for bilingual education when their dominant language is not English and their level of proficiency in English is not sufficient to assure equal educational opportunities in the regular school program.	Currently, no. When the new program evaluation plan is implemented in July 2000, the data obtained will be collected at the state level in August 2001.
Delaware	The state has not defined school readiness yet, but they have begun to study the issue by doing focus groups with kindergarten teachers and early care providers. They have also sent surveys to early care providers.			Each school district identifies children with special needs. Screenings are done to accomplish this task.	
Florida	No, but there has been new legislation passed concerning this issue. With the new legislation, the state is charged to create a standard measurement with which to assess children.	There is a list of 16 indicators currently being used to assess readiness. Districts can use any instruments they choose to assess children, provided they adhere to the 16 indicators. Children are assessed within 3 weeks of entering kindergarten. If the child does not pass a certain item, the classroom teacher can then adjust the curriculum to teach that skill. Florida-certified teachers administer the assessment in the classroom. There is not specific training, but the assessment relies on the educational training of teachers.	Data are used to help classroom teachers adjust the classroom curriculum to meet the needs of the children they serve.	Children with severe disabilities are exempt from the observation assessment, but children who are in a "pull-out" program are still assessed. Limited English proficient children are usually administered the assessment in their native language.	Yes, districts report on their assessment results to the State Department of Education. The results are reported to the legislature to inform them on the progress of Florida's children and how well the state is doing in meeting Goal 1 of the National Goals 2000.
Georgia	Since the establishment of the lottery-funded pre-k program in 1993, the state	There is no statewide system. Some LEAs assess readiness. Most use the G-KAP;	The GKAP-R (Georgia Kindergarten Assessment	Children with special needs are given the GKAP-R in exactly	Information from the G-KAP is

State	How does your state define readiness?	How does your state assess readiness for school?	How are the data used?	How do you assess children with special needs?	Are data integrated into a management information system?
	of Georgia has defined school readiness in two ways: (1) through the implementation of the school readiness goals of the lottery funded pre-k program, which are to provide appropriate preschool experiences emphasizing growth in language and literacy, math concepts, science, arts, physical development, and personal and social competence; and (2) through the support of Goal #1 of the National Education Goals, which states that "all children will enter school ready to learn" and then define school readiness to include family support, health care, and nutrition.	however, there are others that a few districts use.	Program—Revised) is given at the beginning and end of the school year. The beginning data are used as baseline information. Kindergarten teachers use this information as an instructional checklist for each child and provide activities to strengthen any weakness diagnosed. The end-of-the-year GKAP-R is used to show the improvement of individual student scores in each of the areas.	the same way as other children. The GKAP-R is set up to blend into the same types of activities normally provided in the classroom. Each of the sections are hands-on, individualized activities that the teacher presents to the child and then records how the child approaches each activity and what results occur. Therefore, special needs children can be presented with materials, and results can be recorded. Waivers for GKAP-R or specific modifications in assessing any particular special needs child would be found in the child's IEP.	compiled and used at the state level.
Hawaii	There is no current definition of school readiness. Efforts to combine state and community to begin the process of studying this issue have begun.			Within the Department of Health, children are screened for special education programs around the age of 3.	No.
Idaho	Idaho does not have a state definition of readiness. Age cutoff is used. Because the law states that they must test all children twice a year, they have begun administering the Idaho Reading Indicator to kindergarten children.	Any measurement of readiness is done at the local level. A kindergarten handbook has been developed at the state level, although there is no preschool handbook. Further, there are no state-funded preschool programs. Kindergarten, although funded, is not mandated for children (although all districts offer kindergarten). Local districts may give some tests, but who, what, when, and how are all up to the district, as is the application of assessment results. Many districts conduct a screening during kindergarten registration. At least one district uses the Brigance for this purpose. This district uses the results of the assessment to identify children who could benefit from an intervention program prior to kindergarten.	How data are used is decided at the district level.	The Special Education Department gets federal monies.	
Illinois	Illinois does not define school readiness at the state level; each local district is			Each district/cooperative determines how children with	No.

State	How does your state define readiness?	How does your state assess readiness for school?	How are the data used?	How do you assess children with special needs?	Are data integrated into a management information system?
	responsible for any definition that is used.			special needs are assessed according to federal law.	
Indiana	At the present time, a child in Indiana must be 5 years of age on or before June 1 to enter kindergarten. There is an appeal process for parents wishing early entrance. This process varies among school districts. Legislation has been introduced to change the enrollment date to September 1. The Indiana Department of Education encourages schools to follow the NAEYC position statement—that schools need to be ready for children rather than children needing to be ready for schools.	Indiana does not have a state test and does not recommend tests. Many school districts do have kindergarten "readiness" testing at the beginning of the year. For kindergarten, commonly used tests include the Gesell, DIAL-R, Developing Skills Checklist, Peabody, and the Developmental Tasks for Kindergarten Readiness (DTKR).	Most schools use this information to drive curriculum and instruction. Very few use this information to segregate children based on "readiness" (e.g., putting children in developmental kindergarten), but the state discourages this practice.	Children are identified in First Steps, Even Start, and other preschool programs. Parents whose children are not in preschool may also request an evaluation. The Indiana State Transition Team assists communities in developing, coordinating, and implementing activities to facilitate an effective transition for all children birth to age 8.	No.
Iowa	Iowa has no definition of readiness. Iowa is a local control state with no mandated state curriculum. The Primary Program Growing and Learning in the Heartland is a curriculum framework that addresses five domains of learning. It is a support to local decision making. All children should enter school if they have turned 5 by September 15.	Individual school corporations provide their own measure of readiness. There is not a specific assessment required. Some districts use locally designed measures of readiness; others use an observation assessment method. These are used for assessment and to evaluate child progress and improve instruction—not to determine readiness.		All children are screened in Even Start, Head Start, and state-supported preschools. If necessary, they are referred to special education agencies. Individual parents can also go to the agencies and make a request.	Child progress must be reported to parents and building- or grade-level results to the community. Data are not integrated into a statewide management system on readiness.
Kansas	Kansas is reluctant to define school readiness at this point in time. Currently in the process of creating criteria for school readiness, the state places emphasis on the total condition of readiness and schools being ready for all children.	There is no standard, statewide measure. Developmental assessments are used but do not prevent a child from entering kindergarten.		A developmental screening is available to any child with a suspected special need. Children may be evaluated in the developmental areas with instruments specifically designed to identify areas not developing appropriately. When an IEP or IFSP is developed, it will indicate areas of ongoing intervention and assessment to determine progress in areas of need.	No.
Kentucky	Children must be 5 years of age by October 1 to be eligible for kindergarten. Kentucky is looking at the issue of	Some school districts use checklists, teacher information, portfolios, or a combination of the three.	Each school district may use the incoming information about children as they wish. There is no state use of the data.	Kentucky provides a preschool program for all 3- and 4-year-olds who have been identified with a disability. The program	No.

State	How does your state define readiness?	How does your state assess readiness for school?	How are the data used?	How do you assess children with special needs?	Are data integrated into a management information system?
	readiness from a curriculum standpoint. The goal is not to develop a checklist but to look at the continuation of experiences from preschool through the primary program. They want to make sure that preschool teachers and primary level teachers are talking the same language. They also want teachers to know what the curriculum is at each level.			also includes all at-risk 4-year-olds. At risk of educational failure is defined as being eligible for free lunch.	
Louisiana	There is no definition.	The state has a program called the Kindergarten Developmental Readiness Screening Program. It is part of the Louisiana Educational Assessment Program legislation. It requires that every kindergarten student be screened within 30 days (before or after) the first day of school. One of four state-approved instruments may be used: Chicago Early Assessment, Miller Assessment for Preschoolers, Developing Skills Checklist, or the DIAL-R. The state does not require or sponsor any training for teachers, who administer the instruments.	A report is compiled and goes to the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. Local school districts might use the report to get ideas about what other districts are doing. Individual classroom teachers use the information to plan instruction and to detect any developmental delays or special needs. It is not used to place kids into special classes or programs, however. A low score on the screening would alert the teacher to observe the child, and this might lead to a recommendation for further testing and diagnosis.	If a child has a current multidisciplinary evaluation, then adaptations to the screening instrument must be made to accommodate him or her. For example, in the case of a probable limited English proficient child, the teacher may administer the screening instrument in the child's native language.	Yes, the information is sent to the State Department of Education where it is compiled into a report. That report is usually given to the State Board of Education. They may share this report with the local school districts.
Maine	There is no formal statewide definition.	Local school districts may assess readiness and choose their own instruments.	N/A	Each child is screened as part of a kindergarten process to determine any areas of concern that might necessitate referral for special education services. For children already determined eligible prior to school entry, the transition policy states that a transitional Early Childhood Team (ECT)/Pupil Evaluation Team (PET) assessment will occur prior to school entry to ensure continuation of services.	N/A
Maryland	There is no definition of kindergarten readiness. The end of the kindergarten definition	Maryland public school kindergarten and pre-kindergarten teachers assess school readiness within the context of the Maryland Model for School Readiness, an	The data will be used as the baseline for fall assessment data and as a school improvement device for spring	The LEA sample will represent all children.	Not at this point, but perhaps in the future.

State	How does your state define readiness?	How does your state assess readiness for school?	How are the data used?	How do you assess children with special needs?	Are data integrated into a management information system?
	states: School readiness is the state of early development that enables an individual child to engage in and benefit from first-grade learning experiences. As a result of family nurturing and interactions with others, a young child in this stage has reached certain levels of physical well-being and motor development, social and emotional development, language development, cognition, and general knowledge. School readiness as a philosophy acknowledges individual approaches toward learning as well as unique experiences and backgrounds of each child.	educational model designed in collaboration with local school systems to enhance school readiness and to implement effective practices in instruction, assessment, communication with families, and program coordination. The prevalent assessment system used is the Work Sampling System (development checklist and portfolio assessment). There is interest by the Maryland legislature in using WSS checklist information (sample) from the 24 local school systems from the fall assessment of the kindergarten year to establish annual baselines in the seven domains of the WSS. Training to competently use the WSS is being conducted over a 2-year period. These baselines are used as the primary quantitative measure of whether children have reached fundamental milestones when they arrive at kindergarten. Lasting benefits in schools are measured by the CTBS/5 in grade 2 and the Maryland School Performance Assessment Program (MSPAP) Grade statewide school performance index. Other indicators (e.g., health) are being considered.	assessment data.		
Massachusetts	Each school district establishes a kindergarten entry date. Most set the date either around September 1 or December 31 of the year, but the dates vary from July 1 to March 1.	Some local districts assess children prior to kindergarten. If so, they choose their own instruments. The state does not support the use of readiness tests.	Some local school districts use the information for placement decisions and information for teachers.	LEAs are responsible for evaluating children with appropriate instruments. Children may be identified or referred by other agencies, parents, or outreach.	No.
Michigan	Children are eligible for kindergarten if they turn 5 years of age on or before December 1. Currently there is a proposal before the Senate to change the entry date to September 1 and then allow assessment for children who turn 5 between September and December to start kindergarten early. The assessment does not keep a child from entering kindergarten, but it may allow a child to	The results are not used to prevent a child from entering kindergarten but rather to determine whether or not a child should be placed in an alternative program.		This is determined through individual evaluations. If a child is determined to have special needs, he or she may be considered eligible for a pre-primary impaired (PPI) program and can stay in the PPI classroom at 5 but not at 6 years of age. Another option is to put the child in an inclusion classroom with the appropriate support and aid.	No, though they have just started to manage information statewide using a MIS.

State	How does your state define readiness?	How does your state assess readiness for school?	How are the data used?	How do you assess children with special needs?	Are data integrated into a management information system?
	enter earlier. Some districts do assessment testing, to determine if a child should be placed into a program that may better meet his or her needs. Examples include a 2-year kindergarten program or extended-day programs. Some districts administer an assessment when a child enters kindergarten.				
Minnesota	While Minnesota had not legally defined readiness, they do have some requirements for all of the 350 districts in their state. The child must: (1) turn 5 on or before September 1, (2) have current immunizations, and (3) have participated in an early childhood "screening" (a distinction must be made clear that the state requires a screening rather than a readiness assessment). The screening is for health and developmental purposes only, with a goal of connecting children and their families to appropriate services at least one full year prior to school enrollment. Each child is administered the screening about age 3 to 4.	The Work Sampling System of child assessment is strongly encouraged for the school readiness programs (state-funded preschool services) and is being used by some Head Start and child care programs on a limited basis. Minnesota is in the process of implementing the Work Sampling System for Title I assessment. The state does not measure "readiness" but has requirements that must be met (see previous section). The state does provide districts with a list of approved VALID AND RELIABLE developmental and health screening tools from which they can choose. Approved screening instruments include the ESI-R (Early Screening Inventory—Revised), DIAL-3 (new revised DIAL-R), First Steps, and the Minneapolis Preschool Screening Instrument. Training on hearing and vision protocols are provided annually by the Minnesota Department of Health in regional locations. The screening is typically administered by licensed, state-certified early childhood teachers, early childhood/special education teachers, school psychologists, school nurses, or public health nurses. Local districts are responsible for providing training on the developmental tool that is used by the school district. Training videos are available from the company that developed the tool and from the Department of Children, Families, and Learning. The Denver 2 requires a unique training through the Department of Health. The state	The state is currently developing "early childhood indicators of progress," which are developmental measures for 4-year-olds based on the Work Sampling System and others. These indicators provide a framework for school readiness of preschool children to include strategies for what families, communities, program/schools, and policy makers can do to support child development within a specific developmental domain. Information from the screenings is used to connect parents with necessary resources. Local agencies can use the data to analyze health issues, problems with the justice system, but more importantly, to help local schools prepare for the population of children who will be entering their system. In this way, Minnesota places some responsibility on the schools to be ready for the children they will serve. Information can also be used to assist communities in their planning and evaluation, to inform legislators, and to create fact sheets. All of the information is aggregate so that no individual is identified.	There is a statewide system for tracking and follow along for 0- to 3-year-olds who are at risk for developmental delays. There is a program for family support for 0- to 5-year-olds with disabilities. Children who do not qualify for early childhood special education services are given priority for enrollment in state-funded school readiness that provides an array of services based on identified needs. Children who already have an IEP do not have to go through the screening process because they already have been assessed. For limited English proficient children, the state tries to provide interpreters when they can.	All school districts are required to report "district aggregated" results. Early Childhood Screening data will be disaggregated by county, school district, economic development regions, or other custom queries. The state is currently working on a project with the state planning agency whereby 21 indicators will be taken from early childhood screening data to disseminate information to the local levels. Information will also be available to parents, community members, programs, funders, evaluators, and others who are interested in population-based early childhood

State	How does your state define readiness?	How does your state assess readiness for school?	How are the data used?	How do you assess children with special needs?	Are data integrated into a management information system?
		provided regional training on specific topics related to early childhood screening, annually.			data. Several other early childhood data collection and data linkage efforts using Web-based technology are under development. Measures of children's health and well-being based on data collected at early childhood screening are included in the Minnesota state goals document "Minnesota Milestones."
Missouri	Children must be 5 before August 1 to enter kindergarten.	Local districts may choose to use a developmental screening instrument such as the KIDS test, DIAL-R, ESI-R, etc. However, according to the state law, a child cannot be denied entry to kindergarten based on these tests. Beginning in the fall of 1998, Missouri began the Missouri School Entry Assessment Project (SEAP). The SEAP is a comprehensive effort to gather information on the school readiness of children as they enter kindergarten in Missouri public schools. The study involved 3,500 kindergarten children from a stratified random sample of Missouri districts and schools.	The results of the SEAP study will be used by policy makers to improve educational, social, and health services to young children and their families.	Students with special needs are assessed through the Missouri School Entry Assessment Project (SEAP).	No.
Montana	Children must be 5 years of age on or before September 10 of the entry school year. Special permission may be sought by the Board of Trustees for early entry. A statewide, comprehensive assessment system is currently being developed with components to be added over time. One of the areas of concern is evaluation of	Readiness is defined at the local level. It is not uniform across districts. Districts may or may not have a policy to support this. Some districts use the Metropolitan, Dial-R, or observations during spring kindergarten round-ups and rely on teacher assessment through parent interview and child observation.	N/A	Each school implements a Child Find process to identify children with special needs birth through age 21. It is the responsibility of the school to provide services to meet the needs of children identified through Child Find ages 3-18	No.

State	How does your state define readiness?	How does your state assess readiness for school?	How are the data used?	How do you assess children with special needs?	Are data integrated into a management information system?
	early childhood readiness. The assessment task force will consider the role of assessment of early childhood learning in upcoming meetings.			years. The Division of Child and Family Services in the State Department of Health and Human Service provides services to children identified with special needs birth through age 2.	
Mississippi	Mississippi has developed benchmarks, assessments, and instructional prevention/intervention strategies that are designed to ensure that children enter kindergarten with the conceptual understandings necessary to be successful learners. They are provided to every preschool program, Head Start program, day care, and parents. Right now, Mississippi is getting ready to put out an RFP asking for agencies/organizations/companies to submit a list of instruments that can be recommended to k-2. Mississippi does not want to look like they are endorsing a single instrument. From this list, the state would like to put out an approved list of assessments that districts can use.	The Marie Clay observation survey, which is used primarily by kindergarten programs and focuses on reading readiness, phonemic awareness, and concept of print, is not mandated, but it is what some districts use. Districts are able to choose what they want to use. For grades 1-2, most districts are using an analytical reading inventory such as the Woods and Moe.	Peer coaching study teams utilize data for classroom decision making.	Currently the state is writing an intervention supplement for ESL, incorporating informal and observational assessment for early intervention. It is for descriptive purposes, not special education.	No.
Nebraska	Children must be 5 by October 15 to enter kindergarten; there is limited testing for early entrance at district option for children with birth dates between October 15 and February 1.	The state has no standard measure other than the age requirement. Districts are expressly prohibited from measuring readiness by school accreditation regulations. Children cannot be prohibited from entering kindergarten; there is no gatekeeping function.	N/A	Children with special needs are identified beginning at birth to receive services/assistance. However, this is not a readiness definition.	No.
Nevada	The state has no definition of readiness. Age is the only readiness criterion for kindergarten (5 years old on or before September 30).	There is no state measure. There is a list of preschool assessments available for school districts that want to assess children before entering kindergarten. They are not approved by the state for such use and are not required. The list was acquired from Arizona. Some individual districts administer assessments at the beginning of kindergarten. Children are assessed individually. These are not considered	N/A	Children with special needs are referred for a full assessment for possible special education assistance. This is part of the Child Find effort.	No.

State	How does your state define readiness?	How does your state assess readiness for school?	How are the data used?	How do you assess children with special needs?	Are data integrated into a management information system?
		"readiness for school" measurements but help in planning curriculum.			
New Hampshire	The child's birth date meets the district cutoff date for entry to kindergarten or first grade, whichever is applicable.	There is no state measurement. Local districts may use different instruments, but the state does not collect data on which ones or the results.	N/A		No.
New Mexico	New Mexico does not have a state definition.	School districts decide what is appropriate for their community. There is a state requirement for general screening. Any new child coming into school starting in kindergarten has to go through general screening. Each school district has to have a process in place. Any child who has transferred from another state or district must be screened initially. Nurses, teachers, principals, and counselors are trained to conduct the screening.	Data are used at the local level for placement and for further testing.		No.
New Jersey	New Jersey does not have a state definition. All program decisions are made locally, even the age at which a child is eligible to start school. The state is working with a task force and developing a preschool expectations document that will contain guidelines that will encompass all developmental domains. The goal is to allow children to have appropriate developmental experiences. The document is in the developmental phase. This document is being developed in the context of the early childhood program and is focused particularly on areas of high need.	Any measures of school readiness are determined by the individual district.	How the data are used is determined by the district.	Early intervention programs assess the children through local child study teams. Children are typically identified at the preschool level by their preschool provider, pediatrician, and early intervention programs through the health department, Child Find activities, or a variety of other means. When a child turns 3, responsibility for children with special needs is transferred from the early intervention program to the local school districts. Local districts address their individual needs for serving children for whom English is not the primary language.	No.
New York	Children who reach the age of 5 by December 1 are considered eligible for entrance into kindergarten. A local school district may resolve to extend the date of entry beyond December 1.	All children entering kindergarten are required to be screened by the local school district. The purpose of the screening is to identify children who may possibly: (1) have a handicapping condition, (2) be gifted, and/or (3) have limited proficiency in English. The screening procedure must include a health examination or a certification that such an examination has			

State	How does your state define readiness?	How does your state assess readiness for school?	How are the data used?	How do you assess children with special needs?	Are data integrated into a management information system?
		taken place; a determination as to whether the child is of foreign birth or ancestry and comes from a home where a language other than English is spoken, as indicated by the results of a home language questionnaire and an informal interview in English; and an age-appropriate individually administered screening of receptive and expressive language development, motor development, articulation skills, and cognitive development.			
North Carolina	A child is ready for school if she or he is 5 on or before October 16 or if the child is 4 on or before April 16 and can demonstrate that she or he has an IQ in the top 2% (in the nation). If a child has a disability and is between the ages of 3 and 5, she or he is entitled to public funds for readiness preparation.	Locally, assessments are done by teachers. They are trained by the LEAs. All children are assessed in the spring prior to entry to kindergarten. There is usually a physical exam and some sort of written measurement.		A child who has a disability at age 3 is placed accordingly. Children go through a process that is developed between the school and the community. Each LEA had a different way of designing that process. There are requirements for what areas must be assessed, but how the assessment occurs varies. The areas that are assessed are the following: cognitive, physical, motor, health, speech and language, vision and hearing, and adaptive behaviors.	
North Dakota	There is no definition.	Each school district decides on school readiness using a range of standardized and locally developed tools.	N/A	Screening occurs through other state agencies.	No.
Ohio	Children must be 5 years of age by September 30 for kindergarten entry. All children are ready. Ohio looks at whether the schools are ready for the children. There are rules that schools cannot use "readiness" as a mechanism for keeping age-eligible children out. Because kindergartens are expected to meet the children where they are, there is no statewide definition of readiness.	School readiness is not measured, per se. Rather, the collective performance of children in preschool programs is measured as they are prepared for kindergarten. The developmental and (when appropriate) curriculum-based assessment is based on teachers' naturalistic observations and is ongoing. Teachers input the information into a computer that the state provides. This information would include their anecdotal notes and anything else about the student (such as a portfolio, parent observations, etc.). Teachers are also asked to respond to specific questions.	Information is gathered as a means of accountability for preschool programs. Program information is aggregated at the state level so the state can determine average scores on specific criteria. The state can see the percentage of children who can do specific tasks and can perform multiple sorts by demographic categories. Ohio law requires that the state conduct program audits if preschool programs are not getting children where they need to be. Programs that fall	The Galileo system accommodates multiple developmental levels. Data-gathering procedures allow for accommodation of individuals with disabilities. The state is currently refining the system to accommodate complex disabilities.	The MAPS module of the Galileo software package, which was developed for Ohio schools, is used. All funded preschool programs provide data that are aggregated by the computer. The Galileo program aggregates the data

State	How does your state define readiness?	How does your state assess readiness for school?	How are the data used?	How do you assess children with special needs?	Are data integrated into a management information system?
		The assessment system is ecological in that multiple data sources are used to record performance. In addition to gathering data on children, programs gather data on critical program indicators. This year programs will report child and teacher attendance, child and teacher turnover, and teacher qualifications. Next year, data will be collected in the areas of health, social services, and parent involvement.	significantly short of the mark will receive technical assistance in the areas in need of improvement. If no improvement exists, the program will be sanctioned.		and provides means for multiple sorts.
Oklahoma	There is no state definition; readiness is locally defined.	Local schools are required to conduct readiness screening during the kindergarten year to determine readiness for first grade. The Reading Sufficiency Act exists to make sure kindergarten, first-, second-, and third-grade children are assessed with regard to reading level. Decisions about instrument administration, etc., are determined at the local level.	Data are not used at the state level. The tests administered during the kindergarten year are used by the school to help determine the most appropriate educational placement, whether that would be re-placement into a kindergarten classroom, placement into a transitional classroom, or graduation to a first-grade classroom.	Each individual school district identifies and determines how to address such children. In some instances, children with disabilities would possibly be on an IEP, and their assessments would be identified in that particular plan. Districts might address limited English proficiency differently based on their local needs.	No.
Oregon	There is no written official definition for readiness for kindergarten, but the state looks at readiness in terms of the whole child. A child's readiness is looked at in terms of six developmental dimensions and how all these pieces come together and interact.	The state does not have a standard measure of readiness. District tools are utilized to do screening and to inform perceptions about individual children. Information is used to plan for children. The state does not promote use of assessment instruments at the state level. Some districts do measure readiness.	Data are used to measure progress toward Oregon's readiness benchmarks, to inform counties' and districts' perception of their communities and local school districts so that they may compare information across the state, to inform decisions concerning teacher preparation programs in early childhood programs, to look at health issues in the state related to the Oregon Benchmarks Progress Board, and to discern from the data whether Head Start attendance has impacted readiness. Going forward, this last piece will include other early childhood program attendance besides Head Start.	Assessing children with special needs is handled at the local level.	No.
Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania has no definition of school	There is no state measure. Any measuring is	Use of the information is up to	All children with special needs	No.

State	How does your state define readiness?	How does your state assess readiness for school?	How are the data used?	How do you assess children with special needs?	Are data integrated into a management information system?
	readiness—it is a local control state, so no state-level position exists. Individual schools may define readiness, but they do not collect information. The state provides technical assistance—helping them in issues related to preschool and school readiness (e.g., if they are looking at particular instruments). Pennsylvania is working to strengthen the partnership between schools, preschools, and Head Start. The only thing that applies in this area might be the Governor's new initiative, Read to Succeed, which is awarded through a competitive grant process. There are 709 schools involved in the program, which requires partnering with preschools.	up to the discretion of the individual school district.	the district. There is no statewide approach regarding whether the school should be ready for the child or whether the child should be ready for the school. However, a few years ago, the state issued a mandate that the information gathered was to be used for making program decisions but NOT for screening purposes.	receive an annual evaluation from a multidisciplinary team. The person conducting the evaluation might be the preschool teacher, a psychologist, a speech or occupational therapist, or other appropriate person. When working with children with limited English proficiency, an interpreter who speaks the child's native language is provided. The interpreter provides written results of the assessment to the parents. Economic resources are not a consideration. All preschool children receive services regardless of economic status. There is a lot of emphasis on play-based assessment and on assessing children in natural environments.	
Rhode Island	At present, readiness is not defined other than to acknowledge that readiness is a complex constellation of factors and that there is a normal variance among young children's skills and abilities that depend on experience, family, language, and culture, as well as the child's unique developmental pattern. Therefore, in Rhode Island, the sole criterion for children's entrance into kindergarten is that the child will achieve the fifth birthday by December 31 after his or her September entry into kindergarten.	Teachers are "encouraged" to use observations, checklists, and some performance tasks to assess children's skills during the first month of school and to continue to monitor progress. The 1987 Literacy Law did require, and provided resources for, kindergarten screening; however, the issue was not simply that parents were sometimes encouraged to keep their children home for another year but also that the screens focused on "weakness" and kindergarten programs (which are only 2.5 hours per day) were often designed from a deficit model. Since that time, the state has worked with individual districts to develop their own observational assessments, checklists, and portfolios. Use of the Work Sampling System is encouraged.	The data are used for instructional planning to meet individual needs.	Yes, there is a requirement that all children that have come through child outreach be screened for special education before or upon entry to kindergarten. There are a variety of assessment instruments.	No.

State	How does your state define readiness?	How does your state assess readiness for school?	How are the data used?	How do you assess children with special needs?	Are data integrated into a management information system?
South Carolina	There is no official definition of school readiness for the state. Department of Education early childhood staff have been designated with the task of developing a definition. They are currently gathering information and interviewing persons. The information will be compiled and used to develop a definition.	Some local districts are using the Dial-3 for pre-kindergarten programs. Some are using an observational survey through the Reading Recovery program, and some have developed their own instruments that supplement the standardized measure with additional data.	Teachers use the assessment information to plan curriculum.	The Dial-3 is used in pre-k.	Not for pre-k, but for first-grade readiness.
South Dakota	There is no state definition; it is controlled at the local level.	Some local districts assess readiness, using various screening instruments.		There is ongoing assessment; children are served starting at birth, but it is not a readiness definition.	No.
Tennessee	There is no written definition of what constitutes readiness in Tennessee, though children must be 5 by September 30 to enter kindergarten. The State Board of Education's Minimum Rules and Regulations state that "Each local school system shall adopt and implement a comprehensive developmental assessment program for kindergarten children to be used in developing instructional programs for kindergarten children." They call this prefirst screening.	Local educational agencies are required to conduct screening of all kindergarten children. Results of that screening are placed in that student's record, but they are not monitored until first grade (that is why they call it prefirst screening). The vast majority of schools and school systems in Tennessee use Brigance as a screening inventory. Most programs do the screening the first 10 days of the school year. Some do it in the summer prior to the school year. Some instruments require special training, but the state does not require any special training.	Data are used in developing instructional programs for kindergarten children.	Assessing children with special needs is done by individual instruments. In the Minimum Rules and Regulations, there is one statement that says "standardized or formalized testing may be administered to pre-k and kindergarten children only for the purpose of diagnosing special educational needs, developing services to support mainstreaming of children with disabilities and for meeting any required federal program eligibility standards."	No.
Texas	There is no definition, though Texas has been studying the issue. They do not have anything official to report, yet.	School districts at the local level are assessing readiness when their kindergarten children come to school and in some cases even pre-k. They choose their own instruments and their own procedures for assessment.	N/A	The language proficiency testing for entry and placement in bilingual ESL is done as early as pre-k. The Texas Primary Reading Inventory in Spanish, called Tejas LEE, is given to students in k-2 to diagnose potential reading difficulties.	There is a system for managing data (PIEMS), but pre-k assessments are not entered into this system.
Utah	Children are ready for kindergarten if they turn 5 years old by September 1.	School readiness is not measured; however, Utah has developed an assessment tool for kindergarten children. There is a mandate that all kindergarten children be assessed during the first 2 weeks of school to gather data about the needs of children.	The information is used to help teachers better meet the needs of the children in their classrooms; to find out in what areas teachers need help; and to gather information on what is	Utah conducts early intervention screenings by preschool special education and the health department. An IEP team helps set goals for the children who are placed in	No.

State	How does your state define readiness?	How does your state assess readiness for school?	How are the data used?	How do you assess children with special needs?	Are data integrated into a management information system?
			needed to improve, enhance, or revamp the birth to age 5 programs. Part of this process is to encourage parents to create a portfolio on their own child for the teacher. This information is collected on a state level, given to the teachers, and sent to the parents.	classes according to their individual needs. Children with special needs are expected to go through the kindergarten assessment with all the students during the first 2 weeks of school. A transition team of preschool and kindergarten teachers works on goals for children with special needs and plans what accommodations and alternative methods will be needed to help each child complete the assessment. Utah has guidelines for children with disabilities that are utilized by the IEP and transition team.	
Vermont	There is no definition. Vermont is currently developing a three- to four-part measure of school readiness to replace a one-part measure that was based on the Carnegie Corporation Kindergarten Teacher Survey (1991). Part I involves a Kindergarten Teacher Survey seeking data on individual children (nonidentifiable) concerning their status on five developmental dimensions based on the recommendations of the National Education Goals Panel (Physical Development and Well-Being, Social and Emotional Development, Approaches to Learning, Language and Literacy, and General Knowledge). Teachers will complete forms for every child during October. This instrument is currently being reviewed and piloted in several communities. Part II is a "Ready Schools" survey to be administered to school principals regarding policies, practices, and school climate. Part III, currently under development, is an in-depth health assessment to be completed by a health professional (pediatrician, school nurse, public health nurse). Part	School readiness has been previously measured by examining kindergarten teacher perceptions through a survey, children's health (immunization rates), abuse and neglect rates, and grade 2 reading assessment using the Vermont Developmental Reading Assessment. Only the VT-DRA is standardized. All children are invited to participate in developmental screening but are not required to do so. Training of those who administer the assessments varies. Often there is little or no training. The new four-part developmental screening will be used with all children. This will be an observational "assessment" that is "administered" by all kindergarten teachers in late October and early November.	Data will not be used for screening purposes or to make decisions concerning children's placement. Results will inform the state about the capacity and effectiveness of community systems to address children's developmental and learning needs before kindergarten.	Vermont is a "full inclusion state" as mandated by the Vermont legislature. Following a screening, children may receive a diagnostic evaluation based on screening concerns. Many school districts use the Battelle.	The previous survey did have a system for pulling the data together at the state level, and the new survey will as well. These data will not be integrated into a MIS until results are validated.

State	How does your state define readiness?	How does your state assess readiness for school?	How are the data used?	How do you assess children with special needs?	Are data integrated into a management information system?
	IV will be a parent survey to be completed by parents whose children are entering kindergarten. Timeline: Parts I-III, Part IV, Fall 2001.				
Virginia	Virginia does not define readiness; however, children are eligible to attend public kindergarten if they reach the age of 5 years before September 30 of the year they wish to enter school.	The state does not measure readiness.	N/A	There is a preschool program (special education) for children with disabilities.	N/A
Washington	The child will turn the age of 5 years by August 31 of the school year intended to start.	Local school districts may measure readiness. Some districts do use screening tools, and they use a variety of measures across the state. There are many efforts for first-grade readiness.	N/A	Special Education mandates a Child Find screening for children birth through age 21. The school is responsible for providing services to children ages 3 to 5.	No.
West Virginia	There is no official definition of readiness in West Virginia. The only criterion is age. Some local school systems may have adopted a definition. The West Virginia Governor's Cabinet on Children and Families has adopted six outcomes. Number 2 is "Children will be ready for school." The indicators in the current framework are "lagging" indicators collected after enrollment in school. In the context of the indicators project, a number of other indicators for school readiness were identified (for example, attendance at preschool programs, frequency of parents reading to young children, quality of early childhood experiences, etc.). These were not included in the current framework because no data are currently available on a statewide and county basis.	This is a local decision in West Virginia. Most school systems have a signup day, and the children are screened for hearing and vision problems.	Where problems of any nature are identified, appropriate referrals are made.	A preschool program for children with disabilities is in place. All federal and state guidelines are followed as the children move into the kindergarten program.	No.
Wisconsin	Attendance in kindergarten is not required but is open to all children who turn 5 on or before September 1. The state has intentionally not developed a definition. The philosophy is that schools should be ready to receive children at the child's developmental level.	Local districts with Chapter 1 programs use measures consistent with the federal requirements. The state-funded pre-kindergarten programs are not compensatory in nature (are open to at-risk children as well as children who are not at risk) and do not measure readiness as part of their program.	The data are used in a manner consistent with federal Chapter 1 requirements.	Screenings are used when applicable to determine a child's need for further assessment (consistent with IDEA and federal guidelines).	N/A
Wyoming	Wyoming is in the early phases of	Screening is at the discretion of individual	N/A	Through testing, children in	No.

State	How does your state define readiness?	How does your state assess readiness for school?	How are the data used?	How do you assess children with special needs?	Are data integrated into a management information system?
	discussion towards defining this issue.	districts.		special education programs are identified by age 3; the screening is used only to help the transition process to kindergarten.	